

**BATTLE CREEK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
WORKSHOP MINUTES
Wednesday, October 22, 2014**

Attendance:

Members Present:

Susan Baldwin	William Burton	Dean Newsome
Dan Buscher	Alyssa Jones	Scott Parker
Steve Barker	John Godfrey	John Stetler

Members Excused: (All Present)

Staff Present:

Christine Zuzga, Planning Supervisor
Glenn Perian, Senior Planner
Leona Parrish, Administrative Assistant, Planning Dept.

1. Review of Training Session Held September 24, 2014

Ms. Christine Zuzga asked if there was any feedback from the five members that attended the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals training session held September 24, 2014 at Coldwater City Hall.

Ms. Alyssa Jones stated being a new member she found it very informational and appreciated the long standing members in attendance which demonstrated their dedication to the commission.

Commissioner John Godfrey stated he also found it informational and that there was a great diversity of people in attendance and appreciated our planning commissioners that attended.

Commissioner John Stetler stated he also appreciates our planning commissioner's support by attending. Stated the course reinforced how the Zoning Board had not acted upon an issue in the past and offered the applicants an opportunity to delay any action being taken when there was a low attendance of members at the meeting.

Commissioner Scott Parker stated for him there was no surprises as he was in planning school 4-years ago; that it was a nice refresher.

Mrs. Christine Zuzga shared she had been informed there is a new Land Use Agent for MSU extension at Calhoun County who is exploring doing another Citizen Planner training session within the Calhoun County area that is a six-part class which can also be done on-line. Stated she would be sending this information to all Planning Commission members via email when it becomes available.

2. Master Plan Review and Discussion of Goals & Objectives:

Mrs. Christine Zuzga stated the City of Battle Creek has had zoning since the year 1924; timeline for the revision of the current Master Plan has been pushed back because the meat of the document needs to include a study for the downtown housing and should be included in the new Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Newsome asked how the new Downtown Study would differ from the previous study relative to residential living downtown. Mrs. Zuzga stated the consultants will look at housing needs, not just what the market can support, and would target market groups to attract to the downtown.

Commissioner Newsome asked to define the downtown district. Mrs. Zuzga stated the TMA boundary preliminarily from Dickman Rd.; Main St.; Champion St.; and Cass Street. The downtown boundaries were discussed as being different by other groups and Ms. Zuzga stated the consultants will look at the area and had suggested K-Mart and Horrocks be included. Said the boundaries were tailor-made for this grant study and want to connect with the adjacent neighborhoods.

Commissioner Newsome stated the credibility gets lost if the boundaries are continually redefined or set differently by others. Said the responsibility needs to start somewhere possibly with this body and go up from here.

Commissioner Jones stated that Battle Creek Unlimited Downtown Partnership focused effort boundaries are defined by a taxation boundary for the downtown that they follow which is very small compared to several other overlays and can be confusing.

Commissioner Godfrey stated there could be a difference in terminology such as Central Business District and Downtown Business District.

Commissioner Burton stated as Commissioner Newsome suggested; there is a lack of consistency to whom does it fall to provide consistency and unified definition of the downtown boundaries. Mrs. Zuzga said several bodies should take ownership such as this body; Downtown Partnership, City Commission and not any one group.

Chairperson Buscher stated for any up-coming agenda items needing to be addressed to provide them to Christine to have added to our meeting agenda.

Commissioner Godfrey stated he would like to see information regarding new developments that are approved by zoning and not requiring Planning Commission's approval. Ms. Zuzga stated she can send out an email to the Planning Commissioners once a month of new developments for the city.

Ms. Zuzga handed out a document "Michigan Planning Enabling Act" and referred to page 6, preparation & adoption of a Master Plan. She reminded commissioners of the purpose of a Master Plan, the types of information needed and what they want to be included to be tied into the overall plan and need to take in consideration of industry, recreation, commerce, schools, neighborhoods, etc. Stated a RFP will be sent out in the next 30 days to 10-15 consulting firms with experience in market analysis and design along with community engagement experience.

Commissioner Godfrey asked if the Citizen Survey had taken place. Ms. Zuzga stated not yet; it will be done in January and that their primary goals from their department standpoint would be land use, commercial development and capital improvement. Stated they will reaffirm those goals and do not want to recreate the wheel.

Chairperson Buscher noted the sheet handed out for the Planning Commission annual meeting dates for year 2015; this item will be added to the next regular meeting agenda for approval.

Commissioner Newsome asked after the new Master Plan is developed, will it be monitored or is it more of a conceptual document. Ms. Zuzga stated it is more of a conceptual document but would like for it to do more and provide direction. Stated it is a 20-year plan that needs reviewed every 5-years.

Commissioner Baldwin asked regarding plan specifics, if it should be a marching plan with Form Based Codes being included in the Master Plan. Ms. Zuzga stated most plans do not include a time schedule and may note things in order of events. Said they should suggest solutions and would like it to be all included together and the plan is required to be reviewed minimum of every five years.

Commissioner Newsome stated it is good to be reviewed as you will always have tactical routine things needing done or emergencies that can divert funds away from the plan; but if we are going to go through the trouble and expense to develop a Master Plan there should be specific wave points to see what they are doing compared to the plan. Mrs. Zuzga agreed.

Commissioner Baldwin stated she thinks the Master Plan is a reference document in addition to marching orders and question how far out can you go with specifics and if it would include Form Based Codes; mentioned gathering information for example areas such as Goguac Lake which is zoned housing, but is designated as open space. Ms. Zuzga stated the plan could include formed based codes and regarding Goguac Lake they would need to utilize the Neighborhood Planning Council's and have separate conversations with the area neighbors who use the lake and also need to look at housing study results to see what can be supported.

Commissioner Buscher stated he would like to have a workshop on Master Plan definitional terms and Kellogg/BCU initiative and duplication of services/funding's. Said they could do as they had in the past and list the generic terms in the Master Plan and meet yearly to discuss their list of priorities, then vote based on their importance and pass on to City Commission.

Commissioner Buscher asked if the City Commission had met with Kellogg's regarding their initiative and would the Planning Commission be included in the discussion. Commissioner Newsome said it is in the early stages of what has to be done; stated they had a meeting last week with the major employers within the city and discussed three questions 1) What type of destination do we want Battle Creek to be; 2) What are the challenges and opportunities to affecting those destinations; 3) This item was linked to the 2nd question. Said they divided into the three teams and on a business standpoint reviewed different types of destinations; talked about challenges/opportunities to make it work for defense/aviation/businesses. Said they looked at Battle Creek from a regional standpoint and noted there were approximately 10 organizations that were represented at the meeting.

Commissioner Jones stated she had attended and participated in the workshop along with other staff from the Battle Creek Unlimited Downtown Partnership regarding working in partnership with the Kellogg's initiative and working on economic/community development which both goes hand in hand together. Stated Mr. Jim Hettinger could elaborate further if needed.

Adjournment: The workshop was adjourned at 4:47 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine M. Zuzga, AICP
Executive Secretary, Planning Commission